



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
September 18, 2025
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:30 pm**

1. WELCOME

- a. CALL TO ORDER
 - i. Chair, Heather Roberson Gaston, called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm
- b. ROLL CALL
 - i. Present
 - 1. Heather Roberson Gaston
 - 2. Mariane Asad Doyle
 - 3. Wolfgang Keppley
 - 4. Dawn Lawson
 - 5. Suzanne Lynn
 - ii. Absent
 - 1. LD Perry
 - 2. Elizabeth Stark
 - 3. Jayson Whitehead
- c. MISSION (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None

3. MINUTES

- a. Review of minutes from 08/21/2025
 - i. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 4
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 1
 - ii. Motion to approve minutes passes

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

- a. CHAIR UPDATE
 - i. Chair sent a letter to City Council regarding proposed “Ordinance on Camping and Storage on City Property”
- b. OHR STAFF REPORT
 - i. Data in the “OHR Monthly Report” is up to date
 - ii. Staff share that the tabling event earlier this month was successful with over 100 people reached
 - iii. Staff provide updates on the HRC’s submission of legislative recommendations
 - 1. City Council requested for the list to be divided into the below

categories.

- a. HRC priorities
 - b. Items that may have patrons in other localities
 - c. Items that may not have patrons in other localities
2. Staff will categorize the recommendations for submission to the City Manager on 9/19/25
- iv. The OHR's application for the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) was denied by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
 - v. The OHR is undergoing structural changes, and the current "Human Rights Outreach Specialist" was reclassified to "Policy & Impact Analyst"
 1. The OHR is requesting that the "Human Rights Outreach Specialist" position be funded and filled in Fiscal Year 2027

5. WORK SESSION

- a. Discussion of prioritization of "Recommendations for 2026 Legislative Agenda"
 - i. Commissioners discuss which of the recommendations included in their list are the highest priority and select the following items
 1. Support the expansion of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people with disabilities and others with complex needs.
 2. Amend the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to allow tenants to raise unsafe or unsanitary conditions as an affirmative defense to non-payment of rent in eviction cases.
 3. Reinstate fourteen-day pay or quit notices. Under current law, after a tenant is five days late in paying rent, a landlord can issue a five day "pay or quit" notice requiring the tenant to pay full rent or face eviction proceedings. By extending the five day "pay or quit" window to fourteen days, tenants have a better chance of accessing funds and avoiding housing instability and homelessness.
 4. Increase funding for the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Program (VERP). Established in 2020 to support the creation of local/regional coordinated systems to prevent evictions, this program provides local organizations with resources to help families access emergency financial assistance, case management, and court navigation.
 - ii. Vote
 1. In favor: 5
 2. Opposed: 0
 3. Abstained: 0
 - iii. Motion to approve selected priorities for 2026 Legislative Agenda passes
- b. Commissioners discuss amending the HRC Rules and Procedures to establish a procedure for electing officers when a chair or vice chair does not complete their term and correct minor issues
 - i. Commissioner asks about legality of maintaining the HRC's ability to hold a meeting with less than 3 days' notice in the event of an emergency
 1. Staff will consult City Attorney's Office and adjust the Rules and Procedures accordingly

- ii. Vote
 - 1. In favor: 5
 - 2. Opposed: 0
 - 3. Abstained: 0
 - iii. Motion to approve amendment to Rules and Procedures passes
 - 1. All proposed amendments were approved except for the clause regarding holding emergency meetings with less than 3 days' notice (Section 3.7.2)
 - c. Commissioners discuss a plan for drafting City policy recommendations and update the "2025 HRC Work Plan" working document
 - d. Commissioners decide not to hold a Work Session on October 2, 2025
 - i. The next HRC meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2025
- 6. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC**
- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None
 - b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None
- 7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES**
- a. Wolfgang Keppley shares that due to personal reasons, they will be stepping down from the Human Rights Commission
- 8. NEXT STEPS**
- a. **Todd**
 - i. **Contact City Attorney's Office about Rules and Procedures**
- 9. ADJOURN**
- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm